

To the Representatives of the People and Nation of England, Assembled at Westminster at their Session, begun Octob. 20. 1696.

Grace, Wisdom, and Understanding be Communicated forth unto, and Multiplied amongst Te.

TH E Patience and Long-suffering of God doth seem to wait, by giving ye opportunity after opportunity, thus to Assemble your selves at this Return of each Year of your Rebellion, to know what is in your Hearts, to prove ye (not only once or twice, but time after time, that in case ye should still Refuse and Rebel, your Sin may become more exceeding sinful, and your Condemnation may be more just and deserved.) Whether ye will at length do according to his Commandments or no. And particularly that his Commandment in *Isa. 1. 17. Relieve the Oppressed*. In the Margin of the Bible it is *Righten* (which signifies to set right again) So that herein ye should obey the Law and Commandment of God, as to *Relieve, Righten*, and set right again your Oppressed *K. James*. This same Commandment is general, indefinite, and comprehensive: So that it extends to all Persons, of all Generations and Countries, from the Highest to the lowest, that have been or shall be oppressed. Again, there is another Commandment of God, *To execute true Judgment between Man and Man. Ezek. 18. 8.* and so thoroughly execute judgment between a Man and his Neighbour. *Jer. 7. 5.* If ye would once obey this, then ye should adjust the Matter between Him aforementioned and the P. of Orange, according to the Instructions of *Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, and Equity. Prov. 1. 3.* If Ye would do this in a Parliamentary and Peaceable way, by bringing the Cause to a Re-hearing; and then by making a righteous and impartial Decision and Determination of this Great Case, laying aside in Ye severally all Malice, and Guile and Hypocrisies, and all Evil-Speakings and Revenge; (*The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God, vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord*) and all Covetousness, and Fear, and indirect ends and Purposes of your own; This doing, would forthwith staunch, and put a stop to that Issue of Blood which hath been running on the Sea and Land these seven years. And then King *James* would not be tempted, nor yet led aside (for sometimes a good and righteous Cause may be endeavoured to be carried on by evil and wrong Means, through the ignorance of wicked Instruments; hereby Satan the invisible Enemy of Mankind acting at the bottom of all this with yet greater Subtlety and Deceivableness, to render the same more perplex, intricate, and hard to be

understood.) To use such foolish, violent, and sinful Methods, to seek to Re-instate Himself into these Kingdoms. Which are not agreeable unto the Law of God, who is the God of Peace, and not of Confusion; nor yet consistent with the Gospel, which doth not allow to hurt, nor to *destroy*. *Isa. 11. 19.* But corrupt Nature is prone and liable to make use of such. For consider the thing simply and abstractedly: If any of Ye were Dispossessed of your Right, Freehold and Property, by a forcible Entry made thereupon (in which case the Law doth preserve the Right all the mean while unto the True Owner and Proprietor) and Ye could not possibly recover it again any other way; for either there was not Law, or it was corrupted, or the Judges would not admit that particular Case to an Hearing, Would Ye not then try to get a like or greater Number of Armed Men, and endeavour to get your Estates again by Force, as you were Dispossessed by Force. A man in his corrupt Nature (as *King James* doth seem to be therein) would do thus. But a true regenerate and sanctified Christian would not, but rather *take wrong, and suffer himself to be defrauded*, and sit down contented with the Loss, rather than use Force and Violence (which is sin and evil) to regain it. Yet here He may Assert his Right, in words only.

Every one can imagine that it would be a sad World if there was no Law, nor Legal Decision of things; for then all Property would be unhinged, and a Gap would be presently opened, to the Hurt and Murder of one another, and to all sort of Theft, Robbery, Violence and Evil. So by the like proportion and truth of things, it may be Conceived and surely Reasoned, *He that is unjust in the Least, is unjust also in much*, *Luk. 16. 10.* What is unjust and unreasonable in a less Matter, is unjust and unreasonable also in a Greater Matter. And as we can readily conceive what would be the Inconveniences, Mischiefs and Evils, if there was no Justice nor Law in private Cases: From hence also we may know the very Reason why our Land is moved and divided, and because of the Sores thereof it shaketh. *By Swearing, and Lying, and Killing, and Stealing, and Committing Adultery, they break out, and Blood toucheth blood.* *Hos. 4. 2.* And why there is no Peace in our Borders; Because in reference to the King, who of Right was, and ought still to be the Governour thereof, *Judgment is turned away backward, and Justice standeth afar off; for Truth is fallen in the street, and Equity cannot enter*, *Isa. 59. 14.* For what true Reason can be assign'd why His Cause and Case should not be brought to a Rehearing and Impartial Trial, as it is allowed to every Common person, when all Things are not fully Alledged on both sides. That *Act* of the Convention was in no wise a full and impartial Trial; For, *Qui statuit aliquid, parte in auditu altera, æquum licet statuerit, hæc æquus fuerit; a fortiori, si statuerit iniquum.* And even now all their subsequent Acts can no more make wrong right, than they can make crooked straight; for they cannot alter the nature of things. Indeed they may bind and transfer one's Property, where is a Consent of all Parties. But yet again, they may (for they are not infallible) *Decree unrighteous Decrees* (against which a wo is pronounced in *Isa. 10. 1.*) As so they did in the instance here mentioned, in taking away the Right of their King, contrary to their former Oaths of Allegiance, and giving it unto a *Stranger*.

Your selves the Representatives of the People of this Nation, and Ye being their Superintendents, and an Higher Authority than they, would not approve it, but rather Ye would be apt to call them to account, if either the Judges would not judge Causes at all, or if they were corrupt in their Judgments; for then they are primarily and originally Occasional of all that Evil and Mischief, which is done and committed when people go about to Redress themselves; inasmuch as they would not have done so, if they could have had Remedy at Law. Now with what Judgment Ye judge, Ye shall be judged. Here ye are to remember and bring it to mind, O ye Transgressors, That there is one Higher than ye, even the invisible God. *And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no Judgment.* Isa. 59. 15. Even so it may be truly supposed, as thus ye will find it, when ye come to appear before his Judgment-seat (*In the latter days, ye shall consider it perfectly*) but then it will be too late, because the time of your Trial will be over.) *God is displeased in that ye will not execute true Judgment between man and man* in the Instances beforementioned. For Your selves assent, that true Judgment ought to be executed between Man and Man, as to those of low Degree; so God expects from ye, and will call ye to an account, That ye should execute true Judgment between Man and Man, as to those of the highest Degree. As the Scripture saith, *One sinner destroyeth much good.* Eccl. 9. 18. So it is now seen that the unlawful and unreasonable Ambition of one Man, doth hinder the Peace of Europe:

When the Lord maketh Inquisition for blood. Psal. 9. 12. He who is All-knowing will impute all the Murder, Bloodshed, Outrages, Cruelty, Desolation, Devastation, and all the manifold Evils and Mischiefs of this long present War unto them who were the first Beginners, and true Occasions thereof: for it might have been all prevented at first, and may be so still, if ye would execute true judgment between man and man. For if ye would admit King James peaceably to the Inheritance of his Father's, Violence would be no more heard in our Land, as proceeding from Him, nor yet any fear of Wasting and Destruction in our Borders. But a way would be again made for this Nation to be at Unity, Peace and Concord with all the Countries round about. It appears evidently and clearly from the written Word of God (which best discovers the Nature of Things; for who can better know them, than that same Word that made and established them) that the way to peace is by Righteousness: *And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness, and assurance for ever.* Isa. 32. 17. which is true all one to outward as to inward Peace. And from what is written, *Offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord,* Psal. 4. 5. So that Ye may boldly say, and upon sure grounds put the same in practice, We will do Righteous things, and Trust our God with the Event of all. *The Lord is our help, we will not fear what man shall do unto us.* Now the Lord is none of their help, who will commit sin or evil (as so it is to refuse to do according to his Law) to help or save themselves.

By the words of Truth, Meekness, and Righteousness, this Nation might be yet Healed. But when they are laid before the Chief Men and Rulers thereof,

of, an unseen Enemy doth subtilly work in their Minds, either to despise and not receive the knowledge of them, or to *Refuse* and *Rebel*, and to do yet more earnestly and violently to the contrary. *But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jeshabel his Wife stirred up.* 1 Kings 21. 4, 5. In the Margin there it is, incited. So though there is a great deal of wickedness in the heart of Man, by reason of original sin and in-bred corruption (for Flesh and Blood will imagine and practise evil; yet this corrupt Nature would never proceed and tend so far, especially in immediate Rebellion against and provocation of God (for what is shewed forth against his Word, is against God himself, as will appear at his future Judgment, altho' this may be besides the mind and intention of the Creature in the mean while) unless this infernal *Jeshabel*, whose right Name is *Beelzebub*, did initiate and stir them up. But this is the fault of the Reasonable Creatures at present, and will be their Punishment hereafter, that when they do or may know this, yet they willingly give way to the Devil herein.

Such as obey the Truth of God shall be saved: But they who continue in an hard and impenitent Heart, do treasure up to themselves Wrath against the day of wrath; *Because they received not the love of the Truth that they might be saved: And for this Cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a Lye, that they all might be damn'd, who believe not the Truth, but had pleasure in Unrighteousness.*

To all Rulers, Magistrates, and Officers of Justice; and to all other People, whom this following may in any wise Concern.

Whereas I do only Reprove Transgression, and Exhort people to come again into the way of God's Commandments. I do set his Laws before Mankind, and I do Publish his Eetnal Truth. I do nothing more beyond or besides this. Which again I do not out of mine own head, but only from the Statute-Book of the Lord God. If Ye think that I deserve to be Imprisoned for this Doing, and ye will be instrumental to Confine me, God will judge that ye and the other People do deserve Damnation, for not obeying those his Laws and Commandments, which from out of the same Book of Scriptures I have set before ye and them. And when your Breath is out of your Nostrils, and your Souls are departed from your Bodies, ye will receive yet greater Condemnation, and be beaten with more stripes for your thus doing unto me his Creature, who was sent and employed by him in the Ministracion of his Word and Truth. So Warneth and Witnesseth.

RICHARD STAFFORD.

